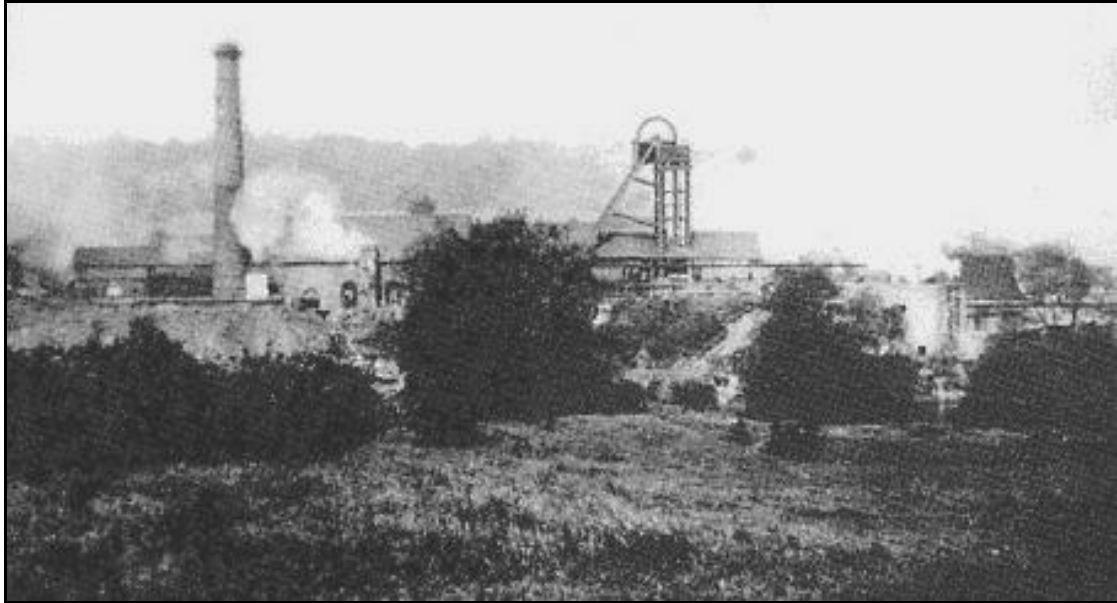


**A HISTORY OF COLEORTON NO.3 COLLIERY  
1875 – 1933  
(KNOWN LOCALLY AS THE “BUG AND WINK”)**



**EARLY 1900's**



**BY SAMUEL T STEWART**

## PREFACE

Although the history of the “Bug & Wink” has been included in other books by the author, new information and an important new photograph has been added. Due to its importance in the more recent history of Coleorton, it was felt that it should be recorded as an individual publication.

**Coal mining was an extremely hazardous occupation in the early years, and many deaths occurred in the local collieries. Not all deaths were officially recorded of course. The examples of Thomas Lord, Charles Marshall and William Birch have been highlighted, not only as a memorial to the men involved, but to serve as a reminder of the huge debt that this country owed to its brave miners.**

### Accident Mortality in the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield 1854 -1909

Cause of Death	Leicestershire		South Derbyshire	
	Deaths	% of deaths	Deaths	% of deaths
Falls of roof and coal	138	47	162	61
Deaths in shafts	30	10	30	11
Crushed by tubs and all other causes (e.g. killed in fires, Explosions and on the Surface)	125	43	73	28
<b>Total deaths</b>	<b>293</b>		<b>265</b>	

Loss of life in explosions, although a major cause of death in some coalfields, was relatively low in Leicestershire and South Derbyshire and there were only 16 fatalities from explosions of fire damp between 1854 and 1909. One hazard which was peculiar to the coalfield at this time was “gob fires”. This was a fire occurring in a worked-out area, due to ignition of timber or broken coal left in the gob. This could be caused by spontaneous heating of the coal itself, and which may be wholly or partly concealed.

### Leicester Mercury – September 27<sup>th</sup> 1862

#### GREAT BRITAIN LOOSES A REGIMENT EVERY YEAR IN AND ABOUT ITS COAL MINES

**Deaths from accidents for years 1857-1861 were:-**

1857 –	1,122
1858 –	930
1859 –	914
1860 –	1,109
1861 -	943
1862 -	1,133 (163 explosions due to fire damp & 407 by roof falls)
1863 -	907

## A SYNOPSIS OF THE 1883 AND 1888 REPORTS ON EMPLOYMENT AND DEATHS IN COAL MINES

According to the reports of the Inspectors of Mines under the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1872, the number of people employed in and about the coal mines of the United Kingdom in 1883 was 512,933. Of these 416,696 were employed underground, and 98,237 (of whom 4,479 were females) were employed in surface operations. The total number of fatal accidents in the year amounted to 921. There was one fatal accident for every 557 employed. Although 11,000 more people were employed over the previous year, there was a diminution of 107 mines at work.

In Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Nottinghamshire in 1883, there were 52,118 persons employed in the mines which numbered 369. There were 74 fatal accidents, giving one for every 734 employed.

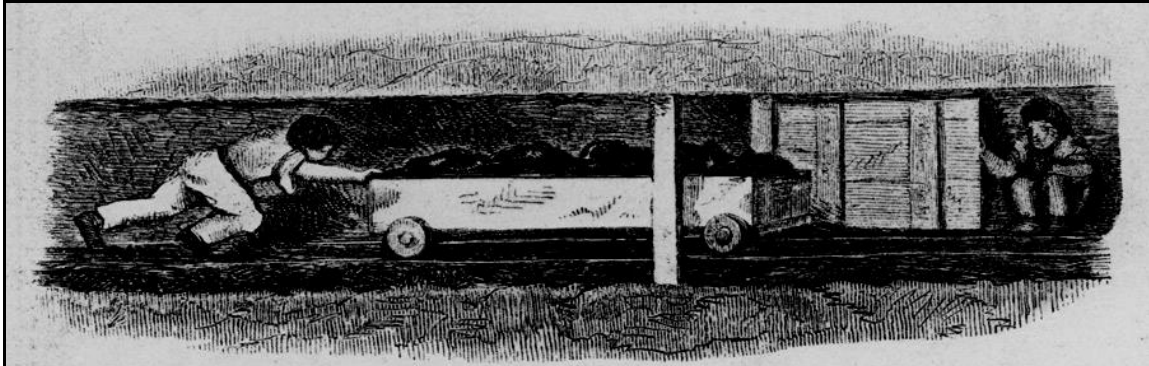
In 1888, the total number of persons employed in and about the United Kingdom coal mines was 592,656 and fatal accidents amounted to 885. In the Derby, Leics, Warks and Notts coal mines the number of lives lost by accidents were 61.

## REPORT ON YOUNG CHILDREN EMPLOYED IN COAL MINES

No. 255. *William Pickard*, General Steward to Sir John Lister Lister Kaye's Collieries. Examined at Denby Grange, May 21, 1841 :—

I have been a bottom-steward 44 years. We used trappers till lately, and they used to go  
30 and begin as early as 6 years old. Now the doors are allowed to fall to themselves. The  
men will let the children go as soon as ever they are big enough to addle any wages. They come  
at 8 or 9 to hurry; but we have had trappers that begun earlier to hurry. The thinnest bed  
we are working is only 10 inches. We cut the gates 26 inches; but they don't stand quite  
that at the banks. The youngest children go there. The corf and coal together will weigh  
35 28 stone. They will have 250 yards to hurry, on an average; they hurry 16 a-day. They  
always fill or riddle. It is a rare thing for the children to go two together; they go singly.  
The biggest part of the gates are dry. There is some places where the water is over their  
shoes; but very few. It is mostly very dry considering. I don't like to see the poor little  
children dabble in water, if it can be avoided. They go down generally at 6, or a quarter  
40 after. We reckon to give over pulling at 5 out; they generally give over at 3. The hurriers  
will stop to eat their bread at 12; but the bigger ones of 12 or 14 years old will be kept to  
work in the hole shovelling muck, or picking it away. When I was a hurrier, they had good  
reason to be tired with a belt and chain, and without rails. I do not think now that children's  
work is hard work. They have generally play enough after their work is done. If a child  
45 does not begin to be a hurrier at 9, he never will do in thin coals; they must be brought up  
to it. We could do with them at 9; but it would be better to have them at 8. It would be  
possible to cut the gates higher; but it would be a great expense. It is not only the expense  
of cutting away, but there is that also of taking the stuff away. We are now paying 6d. a yard  
extra for straight work in the thin bed, where we cut 16 inches of muck, &c. It would be a  
50 capital thing to make the men more regular in their hours of work; but if we were to take a  
man and hang him every now and then, it would not make them regular. Nine hours for  
drawing coals would be plenty of time. I have known pits in the neighbourhood drawing  
coals at 9 at night. The education of the children is very much neglected. The parents  
don't value it, and think nothing about. The proprietors of coal-pits don't notice schooling  
55 much, except the Stansfelds'. They are the best I ever knew; they are always doing some-  
thing for education to the children; and Mrs. Milnes has always done a great deal too; and  
Mr. Briggs also is a very good one for that. I don't know how we are to do without girls;  
we cannot do without. It would be a good thing to stop girls from going after they are 12 or  
13 years old. I have known a married woman hurrying for a man who worked stark naked,  
60 and not any kin to her. I fear colliers could not do without the wages of girls; and they  
are far better hurriers, and more attentive to their job.

No. 255.



CHILD-LABOUR IN COAL-MINES OF THE 'FORTIES: A LITTLE "TRAPPER" (ON RIGHT)  
OPENING AN AIR-DOOR FOR A TRUCK TO PASS THROUGH.

"The trappers sit with a string attached to the door, and pull it open the moment they hear the corves (coal-trucks) at hand, and the moment one has passed they let the door fall to. . . . They are in the pit the whole time it is worked, frequently above twelve hours a day. They sit, moreover, in the dark."

*All the illustrations on this page and the extracts accompanying them are reproduced from woodcuts and an article in "The Cyclopaedia of Useful Arts" (1840-5).*

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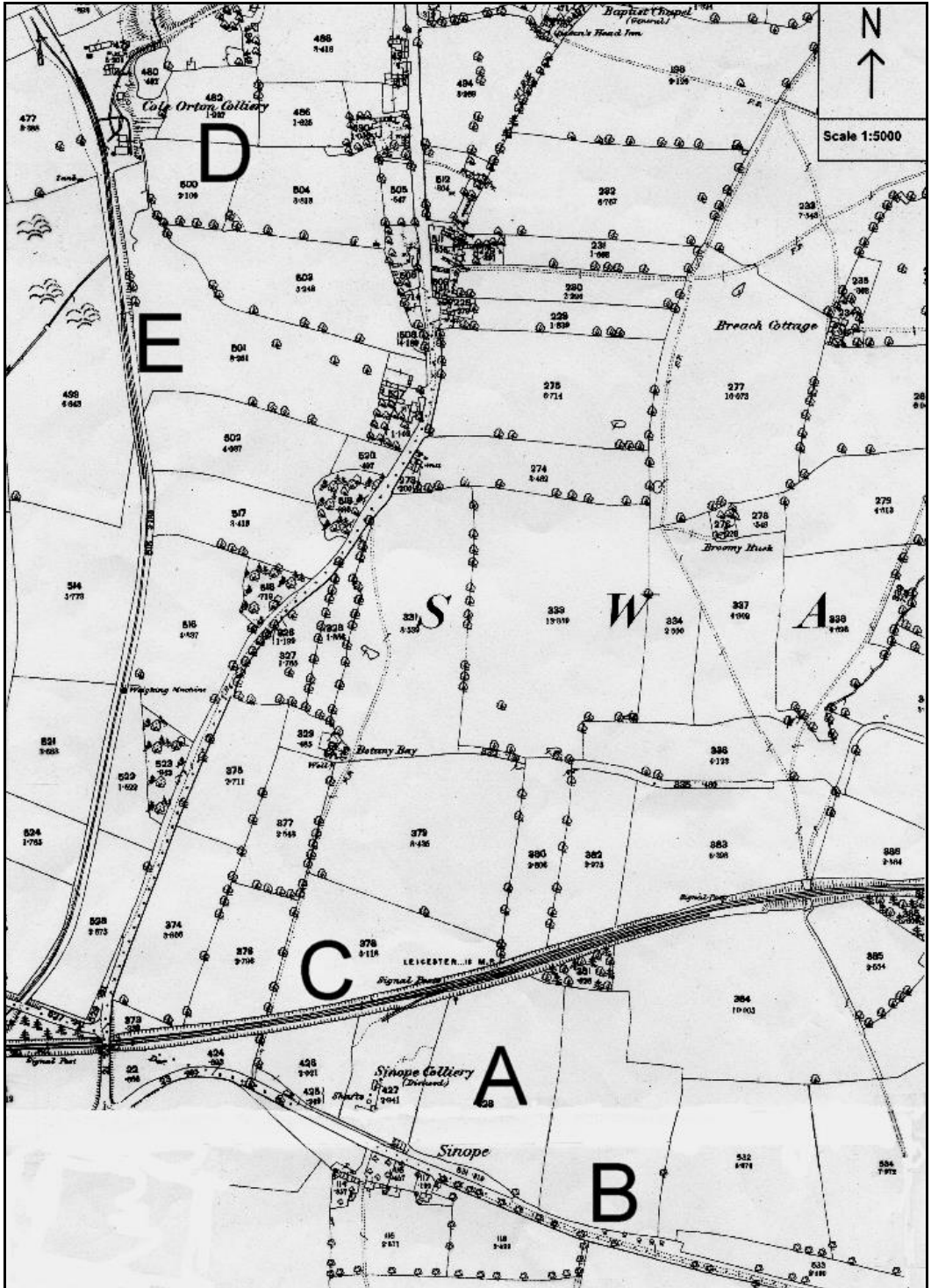
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## A HISTORY OF COLEORTON “BUG & WINK” PIT

The following paragraph is taken from “The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield 1200-1900” by Colin Owen:-

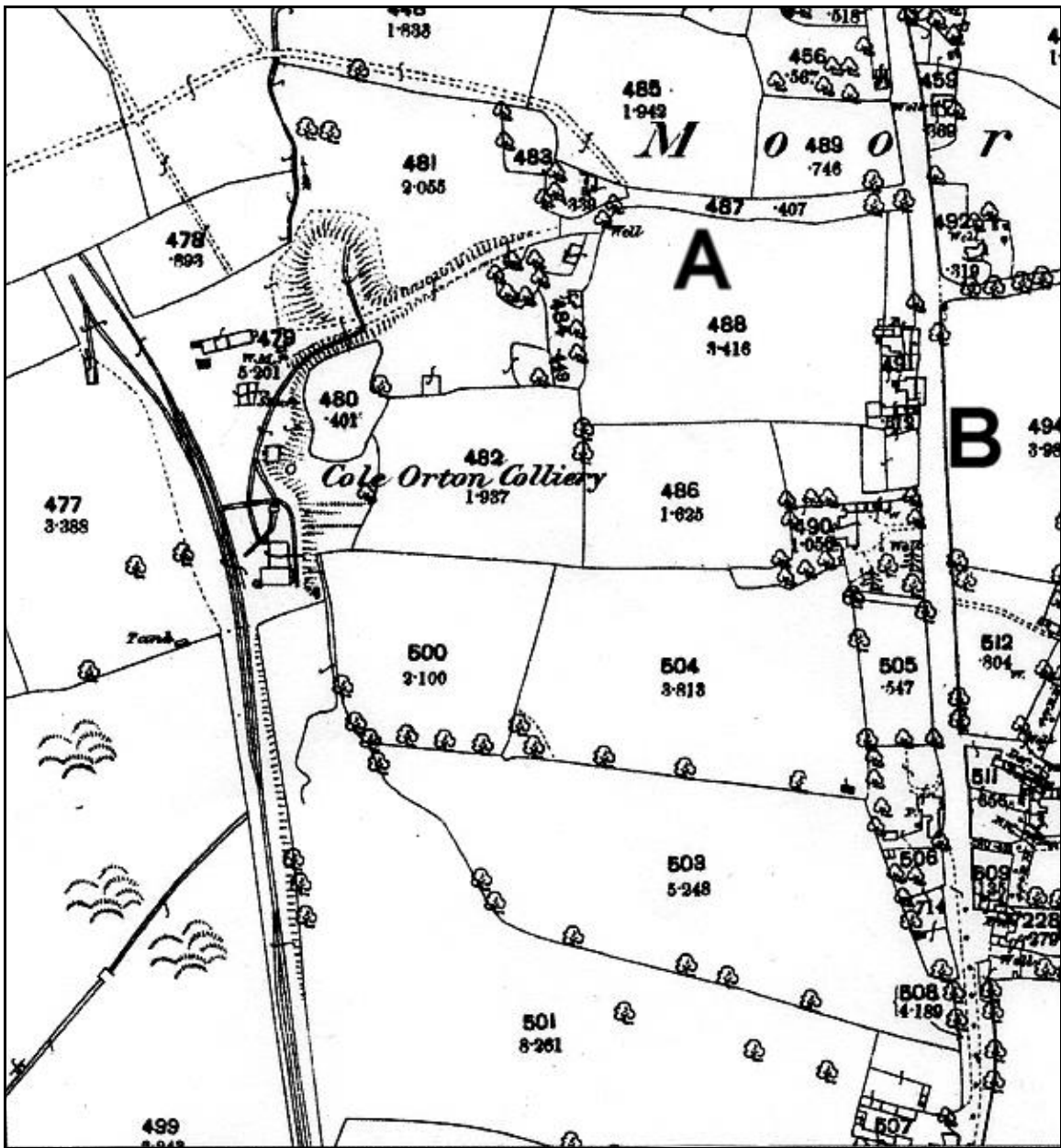
*In 1875, a new colliery was established on the south side of Coleorton Moor by G. Checkland & Co, a relatively large company with collieries at Donisthorpe and Mapperley, and other industrial interests elsewhere in the Midlands. In 1875, they sank two shafts to a depth of 315ft, passing through the main coal, 5ft thick, at 183ft and the Roaster Coal, 2ft 10 in thick, at 312ft. The mineral rights were leased from Sir George Howland Beaumont 9<sup>th</sup> Baronet, at £40 per acre for coal worked, irrespective of the seam, the modest royalty no doubt reflecting the many years of mining that had taken place there in previous centuries. During the first three years, efforts were made to work the Main, Stinking and Nether Lount Seams, but in each case it was found that little coal remained. After 1880 however, considerable reserves of the Middle Lount and Roaster Seams were located, and the colliery raised its annual production to between 40 and 50,000 tons per annum. George Spencer, who acted as consultant engineer for the company a few years later, was of the opinion that this output could be doubled by further investment in a better underground haulage system, and improved banking facilities. During the second half of 1889, Spencer reported favourably on the colliery, which was benefiting from the high price of coal. Coal royalties amounted to £180 10s in respect of four acres of Middle Lount and just over half an acre of Nether Lount. The colliery also worked ironstone which could be sold at 10s or 11s per ton, and upon which a royalty of between 9d and 1s per ton was paid. Although it was efficiently managed by John Turner, who became general manager of the Moira Company in 1893, it was unable to attain its target of 75,000 tons of coal per annum. As time went by, it became increasingly difficult to locate workable areas of coal, but the colliery was helped by the lease of 190 acres of Middle and Nether Lount and Roaster Coals beneath Peggs Green in 1896. Nevertheless, between then and the end of the century, its output declined steadily, and working conditions became increasingly difficult.*

**The colliery had its own rail connection to the Leicester / Burton Midland Railway which is shown in the following maps.**

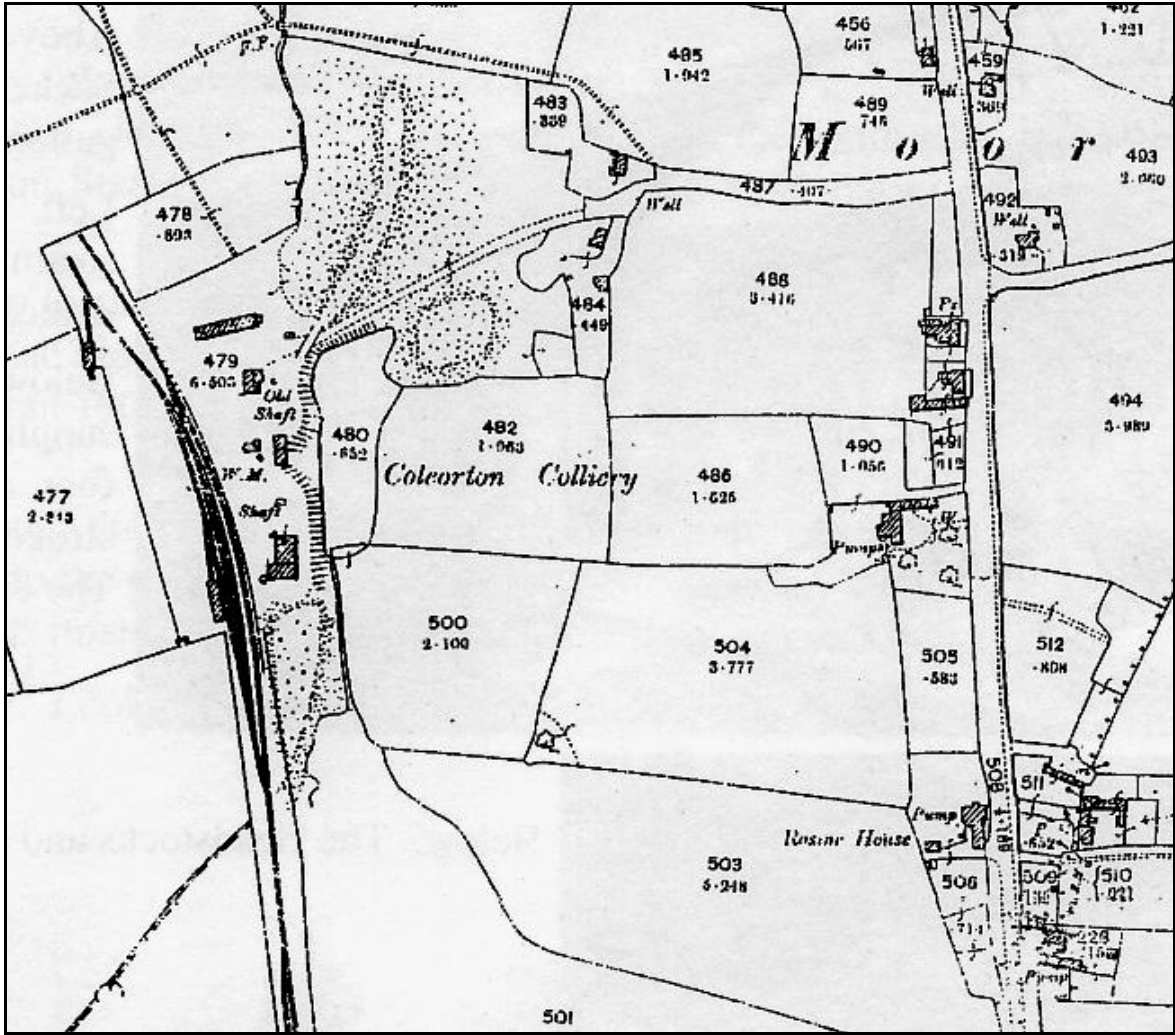


1885 O/S Map

- A – Swannington No.2. Colliery (Sinope Colliery)
- B – Ashby-De-La-Zouch to Coalville Road
- C – Leicester to Burton Railway (Midland line)
- D – Coleorton No.3. Colliery (Bug & Wink)
- E – Rail connection from Coleorton Colliery to Leicester / Burton line



1885 O/S Map showing location of Coleorton No.3. Colliery relative to:-  
 A = Pit Lane,  
 B = The Moor



1903? map showing a shaft to the south with the northerly one labeled as "Old Shaft"



Eventually, the high cost of extracting the lower coal seams after the main coal reserves had been exhausted forced its closure, and it was eventually sold to the Leicestershire Colliery and Pipe Company of Ashby (owner's of New Lount Colliery) in 1933 with the view that they would :-

1. Acquire some 2,000 acres of land, with the associated mineral rights, which would safeguard the life of New Lount Colliery.
2. They would use the "Bug & Wink" site as a pumping station to keep the seams free of water.

**There were 500 men working at Coleorton Colliery when it was closed, and not one person was reportedly transferred to New Lount.**

Unfortunately, very soon after they had acquired the site, the shafts collapsed, making it impossible to use the site as a pumping station. Obviously they still needed to remove the water from the seams (a major issue with the coal seams in this coalfield) and they set about doing this by other means. In 1953, the NCB installed a drift (footrill) at the Bug & Wink site, as part of the air circulation system. This was used by the colliers who lived at Coleorton to access the New Lount Colliery. It is also likely by this time, that there would have been pumping facilities in this area to remove the water from the seams being worked. In 1975, the mine shafts were sealed, the buildings demolished, and the area reclaimed for pasture land. In 1991, the site was planted with trees. The preceding 1884 O/S maps show the location of the Colliery.



**The above photograph is of a private owner's 8 Ton wagon built early in 1894 by E. Eastwood. Note the underlined lettering on the side door of the wagon which reads "Empty to New Lount Colliery". Presumably the wagon had been purchased by the "Leicestershire Colliery and Pipe Company" and transferred to New Lount Colliery after this was opened**

The colliery purchased a 0-6-0 inside cylinder saddle tank from Manning Wardle of Leeds in 1877 and named it Agnes. A second 0-6-0 outside cylinder saddle tank followed in 1901, this time from Andrew Barclay of Kilmarnock and named Samuel Thomas. Three other second hand locos were acquired, two in 1929 and the other in 1931. All three were sold in 1934 after the colliery closure.

## The Death of Thomas and Nathan Lord

**Thomas Lord** was tragically killed in an accident at Coleorton Colliery, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1911 at the age of 32, leaving his wife Margaret (nee. Barkby) widowed with her three young children - Robert, Eunice and Alec. This sad event had aroused much public sympathy, the deceased being so well known, and a large number of people attended the funeral as a last mark of respect. A copy of the Coalville Times newspaper report and a report on the accident is appended. Thomas was a member of the "Coleorton Beaumont Cricket Club", and he can be seen in the photograph of the team which features elsewhere in the book. **Thomas Lord, his brother Nathan and his cousin Samuel Matchett were all killed at the "Bug and Wink".**

### An official accident report on the death of Thomas Lord:-

*At the time of the accident, Thomas was working as a "Stallman", and the colliery was owned by Checkland and Co. Thomas was ripping in the gate road, five or six yards from the coal face, when, without previous warning, a part of the roof which was two to three feet wide and two feet thick, fell from two unseen converging slips, killing him instantly.*

**Fatality at  
Coleorton Colliery**

**100 YEARS AGO – 1911**

THE funeral took place at Coleorton on Saturday afternoon of Mr Thomas Lord, the unfortunate young man who was killed in the Coleorton Colliery on the previous Tuesday.

The sad event had aroused much public sympathy, deceased being so well-known, and a large number of people attended the funeral as a last mark of respect.

The service was conducted by the Rector the Rev Harold Robinson, the first portion being in the parish church, and at the close, the hymn

"Thy will be done" was sung. The chief mourners were deceased wife, daughter and two sons. Mrs James Lord (mother), Mr and Mrs Barkby (father in law and mother in law), Mr James Lord (brother) and Mrs Lord, Mr John Lord (brother), Mr Nathan Lord (brother) and Mrs Lord, Mrs Harding, of Leicester, Mrs M a t c h e t t , Elizabeth, Florence and Maria (sisters), Mr T Matchett, Mrs S Shakespear, of Shirebrook, E Barkby (sister in law) and other relatives.



### An official accident report on the death of Nathan Lord, who was brother to Thomas above :-

*Nathan Lord who worked as a "Stallman" was killed on Apr 25<sup>th</sup> 1912 - "The deceased was travelling along the endless rope haulage road to his work, and, when nearing the end of it, a large stone displaced a stretcher and fell upon him from a height of 7 feet, and killed him. The rail track had been lifted several feet so that the roadway was in solid stone. Some coal was being worked some distance away, and there was a slight movement in the strata.*

## **The Edward Medal (The Miner's Victoria Cross) – Presented by the King Edward VII to William Birch of Coleorton.**

**The Edward Medal 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, was awarded to William Birch, by King Edward VII at Buckingham Palace for an act of bravery in trying to save a fellow miner Charles Marshall during a roof fall at Coleorton Colliery, on Dec 16<sup>th</sup> 1910.**

The **Edward Medal** was a British civilian decoration which was instituted by Royal Warrant on 13 July 1907 to recognise acts of bravery of miners and quarrymen in endangering their lives to rescue their fellow workers. The original Royal Warrant was amended by a further Royal Warrant on 1 December 1909 to encompass acts of bravery by all industrial workers in factory accidents and disasters, creating two versions of the Edward Medal: Mines and Industry.

In both cases (Mines and Industry), the medal was divided in two grades: first class (silver) and second class (bronze), with the medal being a circular silver or bronze medal (as appropriate to the class awarded) suspended from a ribbon 1 3/8" wide and coloured dark blue and edged with yellow. Peculiarly, the cost of the Edward Medal (Mines) was borne by a fund established by a group of philanthropists (including prominent mine owners) and not the state. The Edward Medal (Mines) has been awarded only 395 times (77 silver and 318 bronze).



**An example of the “Edward Medal (Second Class Bronze)” awarded to William Birch by King Edward VII at Buckingham Palace. The reverse showed a portrait of King Edward VII.**

OCCURS.

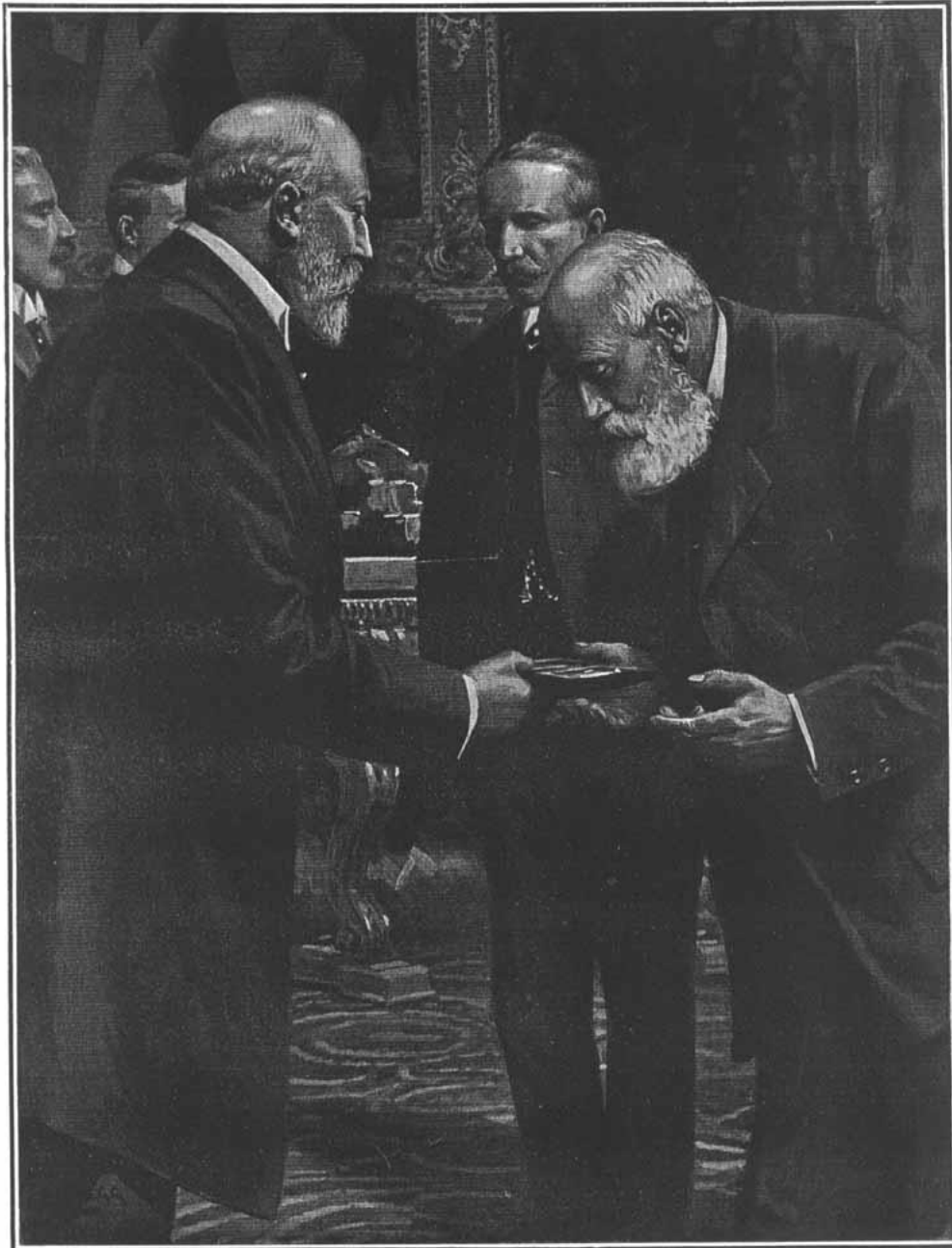
REVERSE.



THE MINERS' VICTORIA CROSS:  
THE FIRST PRESENTATION OF THE KING'S MEDAL  
FOR HEROISM IN MINES.

OCCURS.

REVERSE.



Everson.

Chandler.

THE KING DECORATING FRANK CHANDLER AND HENRY EVERSON WITH THE MEDAL FOR CONSPICUOUS BRAVERY IN MINES.

On February 21 the King made the first award of his Majesty's new medals for conspicuous bravery in mines. Two working colliers, Frank Chandler, an old Yorkshire miner, and Henry Everson, a Glamorganshire miner, were decorated at Buckingham Palace. Chandler, who had been terribly scalded after an earth-fall at Barnsley, crept back under the loosened rock and earth, hoisted an injured man on his back, and crawled with him to a safe place. Everson climbed down a four-inch pipe in a shaft, reached water at a depth of 340 feet, and rescued a man who had fallen down a shaft and was clinging to a signal-wire. The King received the miners in the Council Chamber, where they were introduced by Mr. Herbert Gladstone. His Majesty said that he was very glad to meet two such brave men.—[DRAWN BY S. DIGN.]

The King making the first award of the Edward Medal to two Yorkshire miners in 1908.

## **Official Accident Report on the death of Charles Marshall :-**

*Charles Marshall and William Birch were on road repair work when a fall occurred. Birch freed himself and was attempting to free Marshall when a second fall buried the two men almost up to their armpits. Birch freed himself once more but Marshall was still trapped and Birch tried again to release him.*

*Marshall was nearly free when a third fall completely buried Marshall and partially trapped Birch by his legs. A miner called Witham was on his way from the coal-face and Birch shouted to him. Both were trying to release Marshall when a fourth fall occurred. Witham rushed to get more help, while Birch carried on with his efforts to free Marshall. Within five minutes Witham returned with extra help; after approximately half an hour Marshall was released but he was dead.*

Charles Marshall's occupation was a "Shifter", and he was aged 23 when he was killed. The following notes were included in the report:-

*The deceased and another were engaged in repairing a gate-road. They had taken out a low bar and set another after ripping about half-a-yard of roof, and had ripped far enough to make room for a second bar, a yard further along, when a fall occurred from above the timber, and reeled the new bar and an old one set three weeks previously.*

In the 1911 Census, William Birch (55) and his wife Mary Ann (56) were living in Gelsmoor with **10** other family members, with ages ranging from 6 to 30. His occupation was given as "Below Ground Coal Miner Chargeman".

**The following is a transcript from a 1911 edition of the Coalville Times:-**

### **Heroism in the Coleorton Colliery**

#### **SEQUEL TO THE RECENT FATALITY**

#### **BRAVE MINER DECORATED BY THE KING**

#### **ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION AT COALVILLE**

The King received at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday, a number of persons recommended to him for decoration with medals for bravery for saving or attempting to save life on land. The prospective recipients of the decorations were driven to the Grand Hall of the Palace and conducted to the Throne Room, where the ceremony took place.

As each was presented, the Home Secretary read a brief account of the deed for which the recommendation was made. The King personally affixed the medals, shook hands with the recipients and spoke a few words of hearty recommendation. Among the men who were honoured was William Birch, who was given the Edward Medal of the second class, for bravery during a fall at Coleorton No.3. Colliery (Bug & Wink) on December last, when at the risk of his own life, Birch endeavoured for some time to save a comrade named Charles Marshall, a youth of Ashby-De-La-Zouch. Birch was commended at the inquest by Mr. Hepplewhite - H.M. Inspector, by the Coroner - Mr. H. J. Deane, and by the manager of the Coleorton Colliery, Mr. F. Tatham, who had taken a great interest in the case, and accompanied Birch to London on Tuesday.

An enthusiastic welcome awaited the hero when he arrived at Coalville by the 8 o'clock train on Tuesday night. A number of miners had arranged to have a band to play him to the Market Place, and thought it had not been made public. The news of this arrangement got out, and when the train steamed into the station, there was a crowd of three or four thousand people waiting in the street. In the crush, Birch got separated from Mr. Tatham and others who met him on the platform, and he appeared in the street alone. But he was wearing the medal, which had been affixed to his coat by the King, and he was soon identified and escorted to the market place by the crowd, with the Coalville Town Band playing "see the conquering hero comes". Many a stalwart miner pressed through the crowd to give Birch a hearty handshake as the King had done some hours before, and Birch, who is a very unassuming man, took it all quietly.

Much curiosity was shown by the crowd in respect to the medal Birch was wearing, and there was much eagerness to get a glimpse of the same. It was a round shaped medal with a portrait of King Edward VII on one side, and figures representing one miner succouring another on the other side, with the word "Courage" above.

In the Market Place, a platform had been erected and this was mounted by Birch together with the miner's agent, Mr. L. Lovett, Mr. T. Y. Hay, Mr. F. Tatham, Mr. F. Blow, Mr. Geo Brooks and Mr. Ballard.

Mr. Lovett said it was a proud day with them. As they all knew, Birch had been presented with a medal for trying to save the life of a comrade, and the circumstances showed that there was among miners, as among other classes, a certain amount of courage when it came to assisting anyone in distress. They were pleased that the King himself had placed this medal on Birch for the bravery he displayed in an accident at Coleorton Colliery, and they could say that they as Leicestershire miners were nearer the Crown that day than they had ever been before (applause). Narrating the circumstances leading up to that day's event, Mr. Lovett said that on the night shift of December 16<sup>th</sup> 1910, Birch was working in the Coleorton pit with a young man named Charles Marshall. They were removing timber, and had nearly finished the night's work when a fall of roof occurred and brought down two settings of timber. Both Marshall and Birch were knocked down. Marshall had a large stone on his legs and asked Birch to remove it. He tried to do so, but a second fall occurred, burying Marshall and also Birch up to his shoulders. Birch got free, and still worked away trying to liberate Marshall and would have succeeded in another minute or two, but a third fall occurred knocking Birch's light out. Another man came up with a light, and then a fourth fall occurred, completely burying Marshall, and they heard no more of him. It took forty minutes to get him out, and then he showed no sign of life. At the inquest, the Inspector and the Coroner commented on the plucky manner in which Birch tried to liberate his mate, and Birch's reply in simple language, was that he had never known anything like it before...." *A poor lad begging to be set at liberty, and twice getting it all off but the last stone, and then for it to be of no use*". The unfortunate youth was killed, but Birch could not have done more (applause). No doubt many of those present new something of pit work, and they would know that when a fall had taken place and there was loose stone hanging above, there was real danger for anyone going under, but in spite of that, Birch had tried to extricate his comrade. The circumstances of Marshall's death, he said, were very sad, but it had its bright side, inasmuch as it showed what a man would do to save his fellow man. It was not the first time it had been done in mining, but he was glad that a Leicestershire man had received this recognition from the King for the first time (applause). There was a bravery born of ignorance, but Birch knew of the great danger to which he was exposing himself, when he was doing his best to extricate his comrade. There were among miners many brave men. They knew that when explosions occurred or when there were rushes of water in the mine, there were always rescue parties willing to do what they could. He remembered the late Mr. Stokes, H. M. Inspector of Mines saying that when courage was wanted, give him a miner. And it was so. He (Mr. Lovett) was pleased to testify to the gratitude he felt, that the King had recognised the bravery of Birch in the risk he ran in trying to save his comrades life (cheers).

Mr. T. Y. Hay (manager of the Whitwick Colliery) said that as secretary to the Coalville Owners Association, he endorsed all that Mr. Lovett had said, and he was pleased to take part in the welcome of Birch that night. It was the first case he knew of the Edward Medal being awarded, and he was proud that it had come to Leicestershire. It was in accidents in mines such as falls of roof and explosions that man had to be brave. There were hundreds of miners who had done brave things which had never been heard of (hear, hear), and they were pleased that Birch's act had been recognised. He was glad that Mr. Tatham had taken such great interest in the same, and when it was mentioned to him (Mr. Hay) on Saturday night, he said he would only be too pleased to be there that night to welcome Birch. With all the legislation and inspection, he was afraid they would still have accidents in mines. He would welcome anyone who could come and save them from accidents, but while they went on ripping millions of tons of coal out of the earth every year, with thousands of men employed, they would have accidents. It was nice to know, however, that there were men like Birch, to do what they could to save a comrade, and to show such courage, as he did when required (applause). He (Mr. Hay) had been in Coalville for twenty years, and he regarded himself as a Leicestershire man, and he felt proud of Birch as he was sure every owner and every man in Leicestershire would. If there were other cases of bravery in Leicestershire mines, they must see that they were recognised. It was like the "Victoria Cross", and a great honour to any man. He hoped Mr. Birch would live long to enjoy the honour conferred on him that day by the King (cheers).

Mr. F. Tatham, manager of the Coleorton Colliery, said that he would like them all to understand that he did not take any honour for this to himself, but at the same time, he was pleased to know that he had one brave man working for him ( a voice: above one). He would be sorry to think he had one who was not brave (cheers). He must say that he had done his best in regard to this case, but he felt that every brave act of that description should be recognised in a similar manner. When a man risked his life two or three times over to save a comrade, it was only right that something should be done to recognise it. Probably some of them had done similar things without being rewarded – he himself on one occasion saved three lives – but it showed they were getting better legislation and were getting nearer that situation in which every man realised that his fellow man was his brother (cheers). That was a principal he would very much like to advocate. He was pleased to be able to stand there with the miners' agents, for whom he had as much respect as he had for the secretary of the Coal Owners Association (cheers). He hoped it would become more and more the aim of them all to work together on both sides, avoiding friction (hear, hear). In some districts the operation of the 8 hours Act caused a tremendous amount of trouble, but he was pleased to say that in Leicestershire, as a result of sound common sense on the part of leaders of the Miners' Association and Coal Owners Association, they had been able to steer clear of difficulty in regard to that. He hoped that this feeling would grow (applause). In regard to Birch, he hoped that it would be an inducement to other men to put forward a hand to help a brother in distress as the occasion arose. Birch had asked him to thank them on his behalf as he was no speaker. He told him (Mr. Tatham) that he could do a lot better down in the kitchen at Buckingham Palace than he could do on a public platform (laughter and cheers). On behalf of Birch, he thanked them for the splendid reception they had given him. He had not expected to see such a big crowd.

Mr. George Brooks said that he would like to say that when the matter was mentioned to Mr. Newberry, Mr. Blow and himself, they at once took the matter up and approached the "Town Band", who readily complied with their wishes. Mr. Lovett and Mr. Hay also said they would be delighted to be there, which showed that whatever was said in the Press about the relationship between masters and men, there were times when both could combine to give honour when honour was due (cheers). With all the mining legislation that could be brought in, they would never prevent accidents. Miners had, as it were, to face death, but a good practical miner would never allow another man to go into danger where he was afraid to go himself. He could say that from what he knew of Leicestershire miners. He moved a vote of thanks to the band and Mr. Hay, Mr. Tatham and Mr. Lovett for the interest they had shown in the matter. He added that Mr. Birch knew nothing of these arrangements for his reception. How it had got out to the extent it had, he, (Mr. Brooks) could not understand.

Mr. Newberry seconded the vote of thanks which was heartily accorded.

Mr. Lovett responding, said it was as Mr. Brooks had said – there was a common ground on which they all could stand, whether they were colliery managers, colliers or miners’ agents, and that was in the cause of humanity and doing the best they could for their fellow men (cheers).

The Band played the National Anthem and the gathering then dispersed.

### The following is a list of known fatalities at Coleorton No.3. Colliery:-

Date	Name	Accident Details
19.01.1878	John Ward	Fall of coal
05.02.1881	William Horne	Fall of roof whilst loading coal
22.06.1889	Frederick Curtis	Had left his work, and with other boys went to bathe in the colliery reservoir and was drowned
18.01.1890	Benjamin W Johnson	Crushed by wagon - surface
31.03.1890	Frederick Philips	Fall of roof
16.01.1891	Harold Fern	Crushed by tubs on 15.01.1891
24.05.1895	Jim Robinson	Run over by tubs
14.06.1897	Joseph Springthorpe	Fall of roof
13.06.1898	John Edwards	A set of 4 tubs broke away from the endless rope going up an incline and running back struck the deceased who was working on the roadway. He died next day.
03.02.1899	John Marsden	The deceased expired at home 3 weeks after receiving a slight injury in the mine. An inquest was held when the jury returned a verdict of death from natural causes as proved by a post mortem
19.03.1905	George Otter	Run over by tubs on 11.03.1905
05.07.1910	William Rossall	Scratched 02.05.?? Toxaemia
16.12.1910	Charles Marshall	Fall in roadway
23.12.1910	David Gardiner	Crushed by tubs
19.08.1911	Thomas Lord	Fall in roadway
25.04.1912	Nathan Lord	Fall in roadway
15.11.1917	James Bailey	Fall of roof
18.12.1918	Samuel Matchett	????
15.05.1930	Samuel Walker	Crushed by tubs

In 1883, the manager was Henry Taylor and the coal being worked, was the “Upper Main Roaster”. In that year, the total number of employees listed was **638**. In 1885, the old Coleorton “Yard Seam” was abandoned and the future of the colliery became uncertain. In 1894 the manager was Jesse Armson and the Under Manager John Barratt. In 1896, Jesse Armson was the Manager and Richard Booth was Under Manager, the coal being worked was the “Middle Lount Roaster”, and at that time, there were **212** under-ground workers and **69** on the surface.

In 1898, the average cost of a Ton of coal at the pit head was 6s 0d (30p). Wages were 4s 6d (22p) a week for boys aged 11 to 12 and 18s 6d (92p) for colliers. Beer was 4d (1.66p) a quart. At some pits in the country, in the past, beer was given as part payment of wages. In the 1911 “Coal Mines Act”, all alcoholic drink was banned at a mine. Cold tea in bottles or Dudleys would be a favorite drink to slake (quench) thirst. Along with a “Snap Tin“, a miner also carried a “Dudley”,



this was a small glass bottle that hung around his waist by a piece of rope. As there were no canteen facilities under ground, miners ate their “snap”, near to where they were working. They carried their food in a metal Snap Tin clipped to their belt. This tin was shaped like a slice of bread, so it was just the right size for sandwiches. It was in two halves which pushed together and had rounded corners, to make it capable of taking bumps and knocks. It also protected the miners snap from vermin. A miner’s diet usually consisted of bread and dripping (mucky fat) or bread and jam. Money was scarce in those days, so food was very basic.

By 1910, Coleorton Colliery was still employing in the order of 400 men. In 1918 the manager was A. C. Greensmith and the under-manager G. E. Francis, with 250 employee’s u/ground and 67 on the surface. In 1921, there were 300 u/ground miners and 78 surface workers. A local man, Mr. William Stacey, recalled that he remembered the time when a deputy at the “Bug and Wink”, would account himself well off on a wage of 4s per day (this would have been in the late 1800’s). The salaries and working conditions were extremely poor, and below is an example of the miners average earnings per shift, and annual salary, which was taken from “The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Miners”, by Colin Griffin:-

Average per Shift	Average Annual Salary
1914- 6s 4d	£18 12s 1d
1918- 13s 0d	£199 18s 4d
1923- 9s 0d	£125 2s 0d
1928- 9s 10d	£111 2s 01d

The salary stayed pretty well the same until 1936 when it went up to an average of 11s 0d per shift.



The above photograph shows Coleorton No.3 Colliery (Bug & Wink) rescue team in 1913.

William Fowkes was aged 33 at the time this photograph was taken, and was the son of Newton Fowkes (A Coleorton Methodist Stalwart). He lived at Moor Lane according to the 1901 census.

James Clifford was 44 years old at the time the photograph was taken, and was employed also as "an underground hewer". He was born in Thringstone but was living in Coleorton at this time with his wife, seven children and father-in-law. He was the father to Laban Clifford who features in the book entitled "A History of Coleorton and the Locality" by Samuel T Stewart, in connection with the "Coleorton Toc H". Laban became a pony driver down pit at the age of 15. James Clifford's father Alfred was also a miner at the Bug & Wink.

Alfred Wainwright was aged 25 when the photograph was taken. He was born in Belton and was living with his parents there at this time. He was also employed as an underground hewer.



**A Coleorton Colliery Tally or Check**



Snibston Colliery No.1 Rescue Team - July 31st 1913

**Photograph of the Snibston Colliery Rescue Team in 1913. Frederick Barkby depicted in the photograph was born in Coleorton and lived there all his life. At one time Fred was a carpenter and Medical Officer at Coleorton Number 3 Colliery ("Bug and Wink"), and was responsible for accompanying injured people to hospital in the ambulance.**

Both the preceding rescue team photographs show an instructor and his team of men. In the first photograph they are wearing their breathing apparatus and safety goggles, and in both are carrying flame safety lamps. In the foreground can be seen other items of rescue equipment, including a stretcher and ropes. Note the caged canary in the Coleorton rescue team photograph, this was an important part of their equipment, and was used to sense the presence of Methane which unfortunately killed the canary.

The mine rescue team became a legal requirement for all collieries in the Coal Mines Act of 1911. The teams were made up of volunteers chosen for their physical fitness and experience underground. Rescue stations and teams like the ones shown above had to be within 10 miles of collieries to ensue a fast response to any accidents or emergencies. The rescue teams rarely found any survivors in the event of underground explosions or fires. "Afterdamp" immediately poisoned the air after a mine explosion or fire, and regularly claimed the lives of miners who were nearby.



**Two Coleorton "Bug and Wink" miners enjoying a glass of ale. Photograph taken in Pit Lane c.1910. Tom Fairbrother is seated, and he is recorded in the 1901 Coleorton census aged 23 and living with his wife Ada in "Rotten Row"**



**Charles Abbot Pepper, born 11<sup>th</sup> Nov 1873, was a Coal Miner and walked with his sons from Osgathorpe to work at the “Bug & Wink” where he ran a Butty Gang. He was about 78 years of age when the photograph was taken.**

**The following table shows the Gross Earnings of John Brassington at  
Coleorton Colliery for the year 1924-1925 (Wife and 7 children to support)**

Week Ending	Wages
1924	
19.7	2 4 3
26.7	2 13 5
5.8	2 4 3
11.8	1 5 4
16.8	2 1 3
23.8	2 09 10
1.9	2 09 10
6.9	2 09 1
13.9	2 07 5
20.9	2 07 5
27.9	2 07 5
4.10	2 07 5
11.10	1 17 3
18.10	2 5 0
25.10	2 5 0
1.11	2 5 0
8.11	2 5 9
15.11	2 6 5
22.11	2 6 5
29.11	2 6 5
6.12	2 6 8
13.12	1 19 10
20.12	Away illness
27.12	Away illness
1925	
3.1	0 14 09

**John Brassington was born in Blackfordby in 1883 and would have been c.41 years old at this time with a wife Edith (24 years his junior) and seven children to support. They were living at Anwell, Smisby at this time**

The First World War and the restocking boom that followed created an enormous demand for coal which the industry found difficult to meet because of a shortage of labour. Because miners were required to work all hours god sent, wage rates increased dramatically. Average earnings per shift rose from 6s 0d. in 1914 to 13s 0d by the end of the War, with average annual earnings rising from about £82 to £200. By 1923, average annual earnings had slipped back to about £125 and 10 years later they were little more than half their 1918 level due to the depression and short time working. From the mid 1930's, re-armament and the demand for coal saw earnings rise once more, and earnings up to £5 a week were not unusual. By the 1940's, the miners were becoming among the best paid manual workers. Underground workers were generally better paid than those on the surface, though the small number of winding enginemen were an elite, and were amongst the highest paid at the collieries. Weekly and annual earnings within the workforce therefore varied considerably. In a week in which the collieries were working flat out prior to the mining dispute, the elite of the workforce were earning £5 per week whilst the poorest were paid £2, though the vast majority were earning between £2 and £4. Weeks of this kind were rather exceptional though. The proportion of miners earning £2 or less was far higher for most of the inter-war period as the L.M.A. (Leicestershire Miners Association) claimed. **The wage experience of John Brassington was therefore probably quite unexceptional.**



**A miner filling a typical Wooden Tram, Tub (local name) or Jottie at the coal face. Note the safety lamp hanging on the roof support, which would have only provided very poor lighting.**



**Ponies were eventually used to haul the tubs from the face**

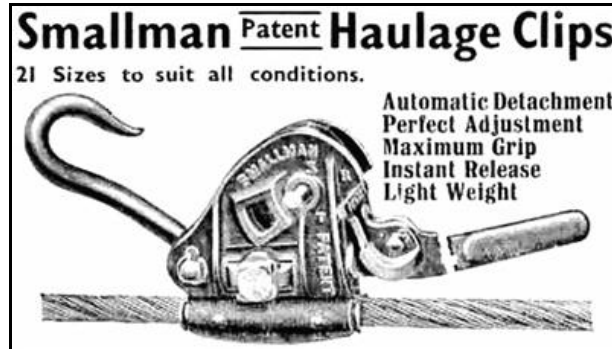


**Timbering Up**

The above pictures give some idea to the dangerous work that miners did c.1920s. Most men would find the optimum gap between props/supports before the roof became unsafe, so that supports were not in the way of cutting or loading the coal. Unfortunately many men did not cater for the unexpected, resulting in thousands of deaths over the years due to roof falls.

The first underground conveyor was apparently introduced in a mine in Yorkshire in 1902 but was not in use widespread because of the cost. The common method used was to fill Wooden Trams or Jotties at the coal face as shown in the above photograph, where they were hauled by ponies. We can assume that these photographs were representative of the conditions at the “Bug and Wink”.

After rope haulage systems were introduced, the trams / tubs were hauled to the main road by ponies driven by young lads. They were transferred so many at a time, and then clipped to main rope haulage systems leading to the pit bottom. **Numerous accidents were caused by tubs / haulage systems and many of these can be observed in the appended fatality lists. In fact, as the following table shows, it was the second highest, following falls of roofs or coal.**



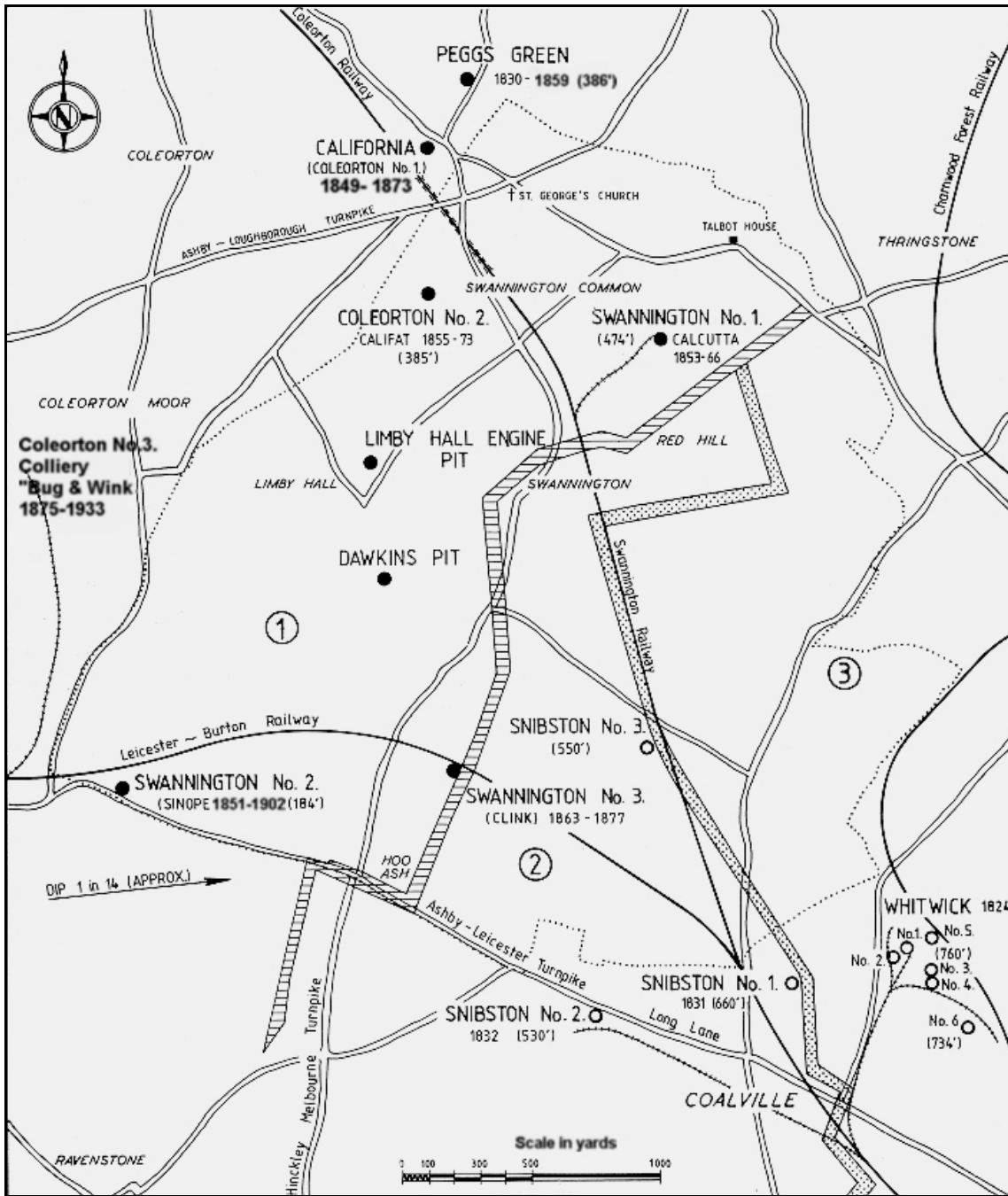
**A typical Haulage Clip**

The most important single cause of death was underground falls of roof or coal which accounted for 47% and 61% of all deaths in the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfields respectively between 1854 and 1909. The second most important cause of death were accidents on underground roadways – particularly being crushed by tubs or kicked by horses – though workers were occasionally mangled by machinery, suffocated by emissions from gob fires and drowned or scalded to death. Between 1854 and 1909, these accounted for 43% and 28% of fatal accidents in Leicestershire and South Derbyshire respectively. Shaft accidents were another important source of loss of life. In all deaths recorded between 1854 and 1909, they accounted for 10% and 11% of them respectively in the two coalfields, as the following table makes clear:-

**Accident Mortality in the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield  
1854 -1909**

Cause of Death	Leicestershire		South Derbyshire	
	Deaths	% of deaths	Deaths	% of deaths
Falls of roof and coal	138	47	162	61
Deaths in shafts	30	10	30	11
Crushed by tubs and all other causes (e.g. killed in fires, Explosions and on the Surface)	125	43	73	28
<b>Total deaths</b>	<b>293</b>		<b>265</b>	

Loss of life in explosions, although a major cause of death in some coalfields, was relatively low in Leicestershire and South Derbyshire and there were only 16 fatalities from explosions of fire damp between 1854 and 1909. One hazard which was peculiar to the coalfield at this time was “gob fires”. This was a fire occurring in a worked-out area, due to ignition of timber or broken coal left in the gob. This could be caused by spontaneous heating of the coal itself, and which may be wholly or partly concealed.



Map showing location of various collieries in the area  
 ..... designates Swannington Parish Boundary